GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:5828
ANSWERED ON:03.05.2000
DEROGATORY LANGUAGE AGAINST HINDUISM
MOHAN RAWALE

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Southern Baptist convention of Washington has recently brought out a prayer book in which aggressive and insensitive as well as derogatory language has been used against Hindus and Hinduism; and

(b) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

(SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA)

(a) The International Missions Board of the Southern Baptists published three prayer guides for Muslims, Hindus and Jews. The `Prayer for Hindus` was issued in October 1999. The pamphlet asks Southern Baptists to pray `for several unreached Hindu people groups`.

(b) Government of India conveyed to United States authorities the concern felt by Indian organisations over the offensive tone of the `prayer books`. The Indian Embassy in Washington was also in close touch with leaders of Indian American organisations, advising them in their efforts to take up the matter with the US government.

The Indian Constitution guarantees absolute religious freedom to the citizens of the country, reflecting the well-known social traditions of tolerance and respect for all religions. Government views all manifestations of religious intolerance in that light.